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ABSTRACT

A study was undertaken at Mercer County Community College (MCCC) in New Jersey to establish a human resources development (HRD) utility role for the college's Office of Institutional Research (OIR). The study involved a search of current literature; a survey of OIRs at 14 New Jersey community colleges; interviews with 24 senior faculty members; and planning meetings with the president and deans at MCCC. Study findings included the following: (1) most of the community college OIRs provided a range of services to full-time faculty (e.g., student profiles, program evaluations, and test score analyses); however, only 5% to 10% of the faculty actually took advantage of these services, and services to faculty amounted to only 2% to 7% of the OIRs' annual activities; (2) faculty members informed of OIR resources felt that these resources could help them in self-development and improve their teaching and their management of the learning environment; (3) a practitioner-based research program would address the needs of faculty as expressed by both faculty members and administrators; and (4) senior MCCC administrators favored the idea of establishing an HRD-utility role for the OIR and were willing to support its implementation. The research produced five guiding principles which were used to develop an HRD-utility role for MCCC's OIR. Initial programs and services have been well received by full-time faculty. These principles can be used as a blueprint for other colleges to establish cost-effective HRD programs. (Contains 40 references, 2 survey instruments, and a 3-year implementation plan.) (KP)

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DEVELOPMENT OF A PLAN TO MAKE THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH A HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT UTILITY AT MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by

Robert D. Bolge
April, 1993

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DEVELOPMENT OF A PLAN TO MAKE THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH A HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT UTILITY AT MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to establish an human resources development (HRD) utility role for the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) at Mercer County Community College (MCCC). To accomplish this task, the following research activities were conducted: (a) search of current literature, (b) survey of OIR's at 14 N.J. community colleges, (c) interviews with 24 senior faculty members, and (d) planning meetings with the President and deans at MCCC.

The collected data showed that (a) full-time faculty members, the most valuable resource of a college, are left to develop mostly on their own; (b) many OIR's are equipped for and provide development services to faculty members who individually make contact with these offices; (c) faculty members who were informed about the resources available at the OIR of their college felt that these resources would help in self-development and improve their teaching and management of the learning environment; (d) a practitioner-based research program would adequately address the HRD needs of faculty as expressed by both faculty members and administrators, and (e) senior administrators at MCCC favored the idea of establishing an HRD-utility role for the OIR and were willing to support its implementation.

The research produced five, guiding principles which were used to develop an HRD-utility role for MCCC's OIR, the initial programs and services of which have been well received by full-time faculty members. These principles can serve as a blueprint for other colleges to establish their OIR's as cost-efficient and effective HRD utilities for faculty.

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INTRODUCTION

Through several discussions with members of the President's Cabinet and the President of MCCC during the summer of 1992, a consensus emerged that the full-time faculty was the employee group in most need of development. The shared belief of the senior administrators was that many of the full-time faculty members at MCCC were not adequately prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities which were emerging with respect to student needs, new educational technologies, and the socioeconomic needs of the community which the college served.

For MCCC, this human resources development (HRD) need was further complicated by (a) a financial crisis in the State of New Jersey which has led to a significant withdrawal of funding support from the community college sector and (b) the installation of a new President of the College leading to a change in leadership style and management philosophy. As a result, MCCC is faced with a real need to develop full-time faculty within the immediate limitations of a changeover in upper management and minimal available funding to implement an effective HRD plan.

A creative solution to MCCC's dilemma, described above, is to turn its Office of Institutional Research (OIR) into an HRD utility. The OIR, established in 1969, has had an effective history of collecting and reporting data and trends within the college and the community served by the college. Also, it has served MCCC as a general clearinghouse for outside research and internal evaluation operations.

The OIR has the expertise and library required to take on the role of HRD utility for full-time faculty development. However, until the writer first framed out the possibility of establishing such an HRD role for the OIR, no consideration had been given to using the OIR as a HRD utility.

Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study is to establish an HRD utility role for the college's OIR, focusing on the development of full-time faculty. To guide the study

the following research questions were formulated:

1. Does the OIR already have resources from which the full-time faculty could benefit?

2. What faculty developmental activities have OIR's in the N.J. community college sector sponsored?

3. What development needs (information and research) do full-time faculty members believe they have?

4. What development needs (information and research) does MCCC's executive administration believe full-time faculty members have?

5. How can MCCC's OIR become a useful HRD utility for full-time faculty?

Importance to MCCC

If the OIR at MCCC can be turned into an HRD utility, the benefits to the college will be well worth the effort. Such an operation would provide MCCC with a reasonably economical way to train full-time faculty and, eventually, other staff members, to conduct their own research. These activities would produce better outcomes evaluations, appropriate blueprints for increasing the quality of outcomes, and a future orientation necessary to address emerging student and community opportunities and challenges.

Further, MCCC has committed itself to the development of a strategic planning process and the institution of total quality management (TQM). Both of these college-wide endeavors would be fully supported by the human resources development (HRD) accomplished through the OIR.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To support this study, a literature search was conducted in three, topical areas with a focus on the community college movement: (a) the impact of societal change on the higher education enterprise, (b) the (human resources) development of faculty members, specifically full-time faculty members, and (c) the

role of the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) within the college organization. The findings of the search are summarized below by topical area.

Societal Change

American society is changing from an industrial society to an informational society (Johnston, 1987). Old industrial models are still lingering on while new information models are challenging economic and social life in all areas of society (Kiplinger & Kiplinger, 1989). Further, the American population is changing rapidly (Levine, 1989). The nonwhite, lower-socio-economic population is increasing rapidly as the white, middle-class population is shifting slowly downward in numbers (Levine, 1989). To prepare the current workforce and all groups in America to take advantage of the many opportunities offered by an informational society, as well as to ensure the health and progress of the informational society, new demands are being placed on the education institution (Johnston, 1987).

Community colleges appear to be best able of all the sectors of higher education to meet the emerging educational needs of the evolving, informational society (Parnell, 1990). Their unique mission (to provide open access to postsecondary education for all peoples) and structure (staffing patterns and funding sources) allow them to react more quickly and more effectively to the changing needs of the economy and potential students (Katsinas & Swender, 1992). Most of these colleges, however, have faculty and staff who were trained in accord with industrial-age models (Hoffman, 1990). As a result, human resources development is essential to ensure that faculty and staff can implement the organizational changes necessarily to meet the emerging needs of an informational society and the students who must learn to work and live within it (Norris, 1989). Principally, community colleges must provide the in-house human resource development programs which will train faculty and staff in the strategic management of the organization, programs and services, and teaching-learning operations (Groff, 1990).

Development of Faculty

A college's faculty is its most important and most

expensive resource (Groff, 1985, 1986; Impara, Hoerner, Clowes, & Allkins, 1991). As such, it should receive maximum attention with respect to development; however, this is seldom the case (Lapin, 1992; O'Banion, 1992). Most often, colleges simply expect their faculty members to receive training and development elsewhere, e.g., in graduate school, at national meetings of discipline-based and professional associations, and by personally-motivated, self-study (Spear, 1991; Kalantzis & Cope, 1992; Lapin, 1992). In short, very few colleges appear to have the will or interest in mounting and sustaining effective, human resources development programs for their faculty members (Deegan, Tillery, & Associates, 1985; Hankin, 1992; Leatherman, 1992).

Studies of full-time faculty members have shown a consistent pattern of professional excitement during the initial years of teaching followed by the growth of feelings of being isolated and alone (alienation) without support (DeLoughry, 1992). Recent research on faculty development programs gives further testimony to full-time faculty disenchantment (Impara, Hoerner, Clowes, & Allkins, 1991; O'Banion, 1992). Of all the development activities open to faculty, discipline-based activities are the most attended --at a 60% level; all the other activities receive even less participation (Impara, Hoerner, Clowes, & Allkins, 1991). Furthermore, it appears that incentives external to the planned development activity are more important to faculty members than the intrinsic motivation of becoming more competent in managing the learning environment (Impara, Hoerner, Clowes, & Allkins, 1991; Spear, 1991; O'Banion, 1992).

A review of the Chronicle of Higher Education (Chronicle) and AACJC Journal over the 1992-1993 academic year provides solid evidence of the prevailing attitude that development is a singular, personal activity which each faculty member should pursue individually. In the "information technology" section of the Chronicle, faculty members are introduced to the latest classroom technology and techniques as individual consumers. Examples of this form of "development consumerism" can be found in the following issues of the Chronicle: September 23, 1992 (A21-22); October 7, 1992 (A19); November 25, 1992 (A13-15); and February 24, 1993 (A19-22). In the AACJC Journal, there is an assortment of articles featuring the

innovations of highly-motivated faculty members which give a clear message of "doing your thing on your own" (Galant, Keith, Kaplan, 1991-91; Alssid, 1992; Kaplan, 1992; Palmer, 1992).

Experts in human resource development appear to agree on one, very important point: authentic development is an active and motivating process which must be directly and immediately practicable (Groff, 1987). For college faculty, K. Patricia Cross has developed and promoted "classroom research" as a superior development activity (Cross, 1987, 1989). It offers the faculty member a course of action through a series of differing techniques by which he/she can assess student learning and make immediate adjustments to the learning environment to promote more and better student learning (Cross, 1990). "Classroom research" as a human resource development activity makes the faculty member his/her own developer with immediate and measurable results (success) (Cross & Fideler, 1988 and 1989).

However, "classroom research" has an important drawback. It is an individual enterprise as promoted by Cross and Angelo (1989). As such, it is an isolating activity unless it is actively stimulated by the institution itself (Kurfiss, 1987). A good case in point is the project conducted by Diane Kelly (1991). While her findings point to the exceptional excitement and development generated by the "classroom research" method of human resources development among faculty, one cannot dismiss the impact of the group support she provided as part of the project (Kelly, 1991).

In short, to mount and sustain an authentic human resources development program for faculty, a community college must provide an organizational mechanism which will provide continuing motivation and support for the program (Kurfiss, 1987; Walleri, 1989). The appearance of informal, faculty-support groups at some community colleges testify to the need for such an organizational mechanism (Walleri, 1989; Bolge, 1993).

The Office of Institutional Research (OIR)

The OIR is one of the newest structures in the college organization, emerging in the 1950's (Clemons & Nojan, 1987). Originally, the OIR was established to

gather enrollment and graduate statistics to support public funding (Cohen & Brawer, 1982). The OIR became a permanent part of college operations when its function broadened to cover the analysis of institutional operations, planning, and the growing reporting demands made by government agencies (Chickering & Associates, 1981). The OIR became an administrative necessity and an administrative operation, without any connection to the faculty or the learning process (Banks & Colby, 1989).

Most of the efforts of these OIR's were and are confined to producing required reports for state departments, federal agencies, and accrediting groups and to providing administrators with marketing, enrollment, and other planning data. Whereas the need for institutional research grew slowly in most sectors of higher education, it was of clear, direct, and immediate importance to the community college sector which was established in a fully-articulated, state-based system of higher education (Cohen & Brawer, 1982). Consequently, community colleges have had to contend with state and federal statutes and demands from their very beginnings (Chambers, 1987). With the rapid enrollment growth experienced by most community colleges, institutional research became essential to the community colleges (Banks & Colby, 1989).

As part of their success in becoming the newest sector of higher education, community colleges established Offices of Institutional Research (OIR's) quite early in their development (Fordyce, 1989). These OIR's have served as central collection and reporting agents of internal and external student, operational, and community data and trends (Saupe, 1990). As they have matured, OIR's have implemented evaluation programs, provided clearinghouse services, assisted employees engaged in research, and completed studies to establish "why?" students and certain publics do what they do (Fordyce, 1989).

Through their twenty-year history of operation, community college OIR's have developed research models and techniques and collected large amounts of data which can be used by faculty members for better understanding students, their needs, and learning behaviors (Fordyce, 1989). Such new data include students' perceived needs, demographic and biographic profiles, community needs assessments, and learning

outcomes (Clemons & Nojan, 1987). Yet, OIR's have tended to remain predominately an administrative resource and operation (Banks & Colby, 1989).

Currently, there is mounting interest in reevaluating and expanding the traditional role of OIR's (Banks & Colby, 1989). OIR's are local operations concerned with understanding local issues and addressing local needs, e.g., community needs, local economy, students and potential students, evaluation of college programs and services, and improving the college's efficiency and effectiveness (Saupe, 1990). As such, the OIR can provide faculty members with a focused center from which they can improve their understanding of student needs and increase their teaching effectiveness (Frydenberg, 1989).

The OIR has the potential of becoming a human resources development utility for its supporting college with special focus on the development of full-time faculty members. There are three advantages to turning the OIR into a human resources development utility. First, the office itself will provide faculty members with a real center for cooperative work and communication, thus eliminating the problem of isolation (Clemons & Nojan, 1987; Chambers, 1987). Second, OIR staff can provide the research expertise to assist faculty members in developing and executing "classroom research" which, currently, appears to be the most promising and direct form of faculty development (Frydenberg, 1989). Third, the OIR can provide faculty members with a resource library of local data and findings that bear directly on the students they teach, the community they serve, and the college in which they work (Fordyce, 1989). There is no need to translate national data or broad, educational research studies.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Data for the formulation of a human resources development (HRD) utility plan for MCCC's Office of Institutional Research (OIR) were drawn from six sources. These sources and the procedures used to gather data are described below under each specific research issue established to guide the study.

Current OIR Resources From
Which Faculty Could Benefit

To review the current holdings and activities of the OIR, two groups were used. One group was the Planning Review Committee (PRC) which is one of the Standing Committees of MCCC's Governance System. The PRC was selected to participate in the study for the following reasons: (a) it is composed of nine faculty members who, by their commitment to membership on the committee, have shown an interest in improving the college and its professional community and (b) a review of OIR holdings fitted well into the official responsibilities of the PRC.

The other group was established as an OIR oversight group and was composed of three, senior administrators: one from the Student Services Division, one from the Administrative Division, and one from the Academic Affairs Division. The administrators who composed the group were all familiar with the products and resources of the OIR. Additionally, they had extensive experience in working with faculty members at the college over a twenty-year period. The oversight group was charged with assessing the worth of each category of OIR products and resources to full-time faculty members as a group and, based on their experience with faculty, judging how these products and resources would be received and used.

Both groups were given a listing of OIR holdings (resources) which contained internal publications and external publications. Internal publications included (a) current and historical student, course, and graduation data by gender, curriculum, and ethnicity; (b) technical reports; (c) MCCC Information Index; and (d) a selection of data briefs. External resources included (a) current and historical student data by region and county as well as by higher educational sectors; (b) local, regional, and national impact (external) variables; and (c) a selection of theoretical, methodological, and issue books and documents. Exemplary material from each category of holding was provided.

The same methodology was followed with both groups. Group members received materials a week prior to the scheduled group meeting. At each meeting informational questions were answered by an OIR staff

member (the researcher) and a focused analysis of the the usefulness of each documented holding and/or activity to faculty members was discussed.

Faculty Development Activities
Sponsored by OIR's Within the
N.J. Community College System

To address this issue, a survey methodology was employed. First, telephone interviews were conducted with OIR personnel at four, New Jersey community colleges which were large and sophisticated enough to maintain institutional research offices of two or more full-time professionals. The interview format was exploratory and focused on the following, broad questions: (a) What HRD activities have you done and are currently engaged in doing? (b) What additional HRD activities do you believe the OIR could offer faculty and staff? and (c) What, if any, additional resources would be needed by the OIR for it to become an HRD utility for the college?

Second, from the information gleaned through the telephone survey, a survey instrument was constructed and used to gather historical and planning data from all N.J. county (community) colleges which had OIR representation on the County College Association for Institutional Research and Planning (C.C.A.I.R. & P.). A copy of the instrument is in the Appendix.

Faculty Developmental Needs as
Perceived by Full-Time Faculty Members

To assess the self-perceived development needs of full-time faculty members, structured interviews were conducted with a randomly selected sample of twenty-four, full-time faculty members from each of the five academic divisions of the college. This methodology and procedure were chosen because of the exploratory purpose of the study. It was considered more important to search out as full a range of perceived, developmental needs in the qualitative sense, than to perform a disinterested study of significant differences in perceptions. A copy of the structured interview sheet is in the Appendix.

Faculty Developmental Needs as
Perceived by MCCC's Senior Administration

To address this issue, two, existing administrative groups were consulted: the President's Cabinet and Academic Council. Members of the College Cabinet included the President, Vice President - Chief Academic Officer, Vice President for Administration & Finance, Provost for the James Kerney Campus, and Executive Assistant to the President. This group offered a broad view of the human resources development needs of full-time faculty.

The Academic Council consists of the chairpersons of each academic subdivision and the Dean for Academic Affairs. The Council is, of course, a valuable resource because it is directly concerned with the quality of teaching and learning at MCCC.

A focus-group session was held with each administrative body. Members of the groups were asked to relate freely their experiences with students and faculty members, their knowledge of problems and issues, and their feelings about how teaching and learning could be improved at MCCC.

Making MCCC's OIR a HRD
Utility for Full-Time Faculty

To build a workable HRD utility-model for the OIR, the following procedures were followed. Utilizing the data collected from the questions and procedures above, the researcher drafted guiding principles for establishing an HRD utility plan. These principles were reviewed by the President of the College and the Dean for Academic Affairs and modified in consultation with the researcher.

Using these guiding principles, a three-year draft plan was outlined and submitted to the Academic Council for further input and modification. The revised, three-year draft plan was submitted to the the President of the College and the Dean for Academic Affairs for approval to implement.

Definition of an HRD Utility

An "HRD utility" is defined as a system of

developmental components designed to motivate professional development, to guide individual and group development projects, and to communicate the results of developmental activities which can benefit the ongoing professional work of others. These components include (a) a repository of information (library), (b) communication organs, (c) access to hardware and software support, and (d) staff who can perform as experts, collaborators, coordinators, and/or linkage agents.

Assumptions

This study is based on three assumptions. First, the OIR is an under-utilzed resource in most colleges, especially community colleges. By its nature and the functions it performs, the OIR takes on the role of HRD utility for faculty members.

Second, faculty, especially full-time faculty at community colleges, can best develop themselves by actively pursuing teaching-learning excellence in the classroom. To accomplish this end, faculty members need a central, HRD utility which will assist them by providing expertise, collaboration, coordination, and/or linkage when each is needed.

Third, effective human resources development is a team effort. Too often, faculty members are left on their own without essential assistance and/or guidance.

Limitation

The study was exploratory and practitioner-based. As a result, survey data were collected in an information format, not a scientific format. Although the survey instruments were developed from initial open-ended interviews, they were not designed to support inferential analysis.

RESULTS

The development of a plan to make the OIR a HRD utility at MCCC is described below. Specific data and processes are summarized under each research issue

established to guide the study.

Current OIR Resources From
Which Faculty Could Benefit

The Planning Review Committee (PRC) devoted ten meetings to the review of OIR holdings during the academic year. The committee members (nine faculty members) who participated in these focus-group sessions showed genuine interest in being provided with research data. They felt that the available biographic, demographic, and academic data on MCCC students would definitely help them and their peers in preparing classroom presentations. Additionally, they were genuinely surprised at the external resources which were available through the OIR. They viewed these resources as important for giving faculty members perspective on what was happening within the community college movement and the whole of the higher education enterprise in the state and nation.

None of these committee members had taken the opportunity to search out institutional resource data or to contact the OIR on their own. They cited the following reasons: (a) lack of knowledge about what was available, (b) not knowing whom to ask, and (c) lack of time because of their class schedules and/or divisional responsibilities.

Furthermore, The PRC members reported that they had never received OIR data briefs or technical reports from their chairpersons. To their recollection, these documents had never been presented or discussed in their monthly divisional meetings.

Lastly, seven of the nine PRC (faculty) members had not known of the existence of the MCCC Information Index. The remaining, two faculty members were familiar with the Index because, as curriculum coordinators, they had used the statistics in it to complete program evaluation reports. (Each academic division at MCCC has a copy of the Index for which the OIR distributes updates at regular intervals throughout the academic year.)

The oversight group held four meetings during the academic year. The group reached consensus on the following, four assessments. First, they found that

most (approximately 90%) of the internal publications (products) would benefit faculty members, especially those reports and statistics which addressed student characteristics and success by course and curriculum. These materials were most directly applicable to faculty responsibilities.

Second, the group members believed that most of the external publications and resources were tangential to the immediate concerns of faculty members. As such, most faculty would not find the "psychological time" to pursue them unless certain responsibilities (e.g., program evaluation, membership on specific college committees, graduate work, or outside associational affiliations) required such information and resources.

Third, the group proposed that the OIR could best provide human resources development assistance to faculty members if it focused on the direct teaching experience, course and program construction, course and program evaluation, and the evaluation of academic services. In accord with this position, the group recommended a selection of resource categories which would be of major interest to faculty.

Fourth, the group recommended that, once OIR was able to establish a successful human resources development program (utility) for full-time faculty, it should expand its services to part-time faculty members and student services professionals.

Faculty Development Activities Sponsored by OIR's Within the N.J. Community College System

Results From Telephone Interviews. The telephone interviews with the administrators in charge of the OIR at each of the four, selected county colleges averaged about 45 minutes. The interviews provided additional categories of services and developmental activities. These data were added to the data on categories which were provided by the MCCC oversight group and used to prepare the survey instrument which was used to glean data from all N.J. county college OIR's.

The experiences with faculty members which the respondents related were very similar to the experiences at MCCC. Few faculty members requested

information or assistance from the OIR. Among the four OIR's, the average number of faculty members who requested services never rose more than 10% of the total, full-time faculty. Most of the requests were centered around program evaluation studies. No respondent was able to remember the last time the OIR was asked to provide research services which related directly to teaching-learning, with the exception of grant activities.

All responding schools had OIR-based, college-wide procedures for giving faculty members the opportunity to receive assistance in developing students and analyzing data. As with MCCC, most requests to the OIR were based on graduate work and on the administrative duties of tenured faculty members.

All four, college OIR's prepared reports for administrative offices with the expectation that faculty members would be informed about the reports (products) and motivated to review them. However, as in MCCC's case, there appeared to be little interest among supervising administrators to present these products to faculty members and to motivate faculty use of the research data. As a result, some of the college OIR's had developed direct avenues to the faculty. One OIR distributed its own quarterly newsletter. Another circulated a monthly OIR publication called Institutional Research Notes. Another OIR submitted short articles to the college-wide, monthly newsletter. Lastly, one innovative OIR developed a communication system with the faculty which consisted of an annual factbook, voice mail messages, and electronic mail enrollment updates.

When questioned about what additional resources they would need to establish an HRD role for their OIR's, the respondents were unanimous in their responses. They needed additional staff members. Equipment, software, and supporting supplies were not an issue. The respondents reported that these were in sufficient supply. Additional staff members, however, were regarded as an absolute need to work with faculty on a one-to-one basis if they were going to establish an HRD role for their OIR's.

Results From Survey. Of the nineteen county (community) colleges in New Jersey, fourteen submitted completed survey forms and participated in follow-up

telephone checks. Of the five colleges which did not participate, two did not have OIR administrators at the time of the survey and three chose not to participate because their OIR's consisted of one employee whose responsibilities did not extend to support of the faculty.

Most of the county (community) college OIR's which participated in the survey, provide a wide range of services to full-time faculty. Table 1 on page 16 presents the number of OIR's providing each of the services included in the study.

The question is how many faculty members actually take advantage of these services as compared to the administrative staff? From the data provided on the survey forms and from follow-up telephone checks, the answer is between five to ten percent of the full-time faculty for most OIR's with one OIR claiming 25%. Also, faculty requests and services amounted to an average of two percent to seven percent of annual OIR operations.

According to the survey results, less than half the OIR's surveyed provided staff development activities for full-time faculty. Table 2 on page 17 presents the number of OIR's providing each of the staff development activities included in the study.

A telephone follow-up of OIR respondents was conducted to gather information about recent staff development activities. First, all respondents expressed greater satisfaction with individualized development activities (working one-to-one with faculty members).

Second, most respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the use of workshops as staff development vehicles. Workshops were seen as requiring a lot of time to prepare and being poorly attended. Twelve of the responding OIR's had sponsored their last workshops in the mid 1980's. The two, remaining OIR's had sponsored their last workshops in 1988. Less than one-third of the OIR's which participated in the study were planning future, staff development activities as shown in Table 3 on page 18.

Table 1: Number and Percentage of N.J. Community College OIR's Which Provide the Following Services to Full-Time Faculty Members (n = 14)

Number of OIR's	Percent of OIR's	Service
12	86%	Profile Information on Students by Specific Programs
12	86%	Profile Information on Students by Entering Cohort
12	86%	Follow-Up of Graduates
11	79%	Profile Information on Students by Status (PT/FT)
11	79%	Profile Information on Total Student Population by Semester
11	79%	Assistance with Graduate Research Projects
11	79%	Needs Assessment for Program Development
9	64%	Profile Information on Total Student Population by Year
8	57%	Profile Information on Students by Specific Courses
8	57%	Evaluation of Programs
7	50%	Evaluation of Student Learning
7	50%	Evaluation of Courses
6	43%	Test Score Analysis
5	36%	Test Scoring
4	29%	Test Development
2	14%	Analysis of Grades and Grading
1	7%	Assessing Special Treatments/ Subgroups of Students
1	7%	Assistance in Determining Course Offerings per Term
1	7%	Selection of National Assessment Instruments
1	7%	Assistance in Developing Assessment Instruments

Table 2: Number and Percentage of N.J. Community College OIR's Which Have Provided the Following Staff Development Activities to Full-Time Faculty Members (n = 14)

Number of OIR's	Percent of OIR's	Staff Development Activity
6	43%	Assessing Student Learning Outcomes
4	29%	Designing/Conducting Program Evaluations
3	21%	Constructing Tests
3	21%	Conducting Research Projects
3	21%	Designing/Conducting Student Evaluations
3	21%	Designing Data Collection Instruments
3	21%	Statistical Methods of Analysis
3	21%	Using Computer Statistical Packages (Software)
2	14%	Analyzing Test Results
2	14%	Identifying Learning Styles
2	14%	Designing/Conducting Course Evaluations
2	14%	Utilizing Current Research on Teaching and Learning
1	7%	Educational Technology
1	7%	General Educational Practices

Table 3: Number and Percentage of N.J. County (Community) College OIR's Which Are Considering Providing the Following Staff Development Activities to Full-Time Faculty Members (n = 14)

Number of OIR's	Percent of OIR's	Staff Development Activities
4	29%	Designing/Conducting Student Evaluations
4	29%	Designing/Conducting Program Evaluations
4	29%	Statistical Methods of Analysis
3	21%	Constructing Tests
3	21%	Identifying Student Learning Styles
3	21%	Assessing Student Learning Outcomes
3	21%	Conducting Research Projects
3	21%	Designing/Conducting Course Evaluations
3	21%	Designing Data Collection Instruments
3	21%	Utilizing Current Research on Teaching and Learning
3	21%	Using Computer Statistical Packages (Software)
2	14%	Designing/Conducting Experiments
1	7%	Analyzing Test Results

Faculty Developmental Needs as Perceived by Full-Time Faculty Members

Of the twenty-four faculty members who participated in the structured interview portion of this study, 71% targeted the "evaluation of student learning" as the key service which MCCC's OIR could provide to them. Table 4 on page 19 shows the number of faculty respondents who selected each of the OIR services addressed in the interviews.

Table 4: Number and Percentage of Full-Time Faculty Respondents Who Believed That MCCC's OIR Should Offer the Following Services to Full-Time Faculty Members (n = 24)

Respondents Number	Respondents Percent	Service
17	71%	Evaluation of Student Learning
11	46%	Needs Assessment for Program Development
11	46%	Evaluation of Courses
9	38%	Evaluation of Programs
9	38%	Profile Information on Students by Specific Courses
7	29%	Profile Information on Students by Specific Programs
7	29%	Assistance with Graduate Research Projects
5	21%	Test Score Analysis
4	17%	Test Development
1	4%	Analysis of Student Success After Leaving MCCC
1	4%	Resources Available Through the OIR
1	4%	Data to Steer Marketing Efforts at High Schools
1	4%	Student Academic Tracking
1	4%	Student Withdrawal Rates Over Time
1	4%	Trends within MCCC to Address Issues Quickly

Of the twenty-four faculty respondents, 67% selected "identifying student learning styles" as the key staff development activity which MCCC's OIR could provide to them. Table 5 on page 20 shows the number of faculty respondents who selected each of the possible OIR staff development activities addressed in the interviews.

Table 5: Number and Percentage of Full-Time Faculty Respondents Who Believed that MCCC's OIR Should Offer the Following Staff Development Activities to Full-Time Faculty Members (n = 24)

Respondents Number	Respondents Percent	Staff Development Activities
16	67%	Identifying Student Learning Styles
13	54%	Course Evaluations (Designing and Conducting)
11	46%	Assessing Student Learning Outcomes
11	46%	Utilizing Current Research on Teaching/Learning
10	42%	Constructing Tests
9	38%	Program Evaluations (Designing and Conducting)
8	33%	Analyzing Test Results
7	29%	Student Evaluations (Designing and Conducting)
4	17%	Using Computer Statistical Packages (Software)
3	13%	Conducting Research Projects
3	13%	Designing Data Collection Instruments
2	8%	Learning Methods of Analysis
1	4%	Interpretation of Skills Tests Scores
1	4%	Standards of Grading
1	4%	Terminals and Their Use
1	4%	Methods of Reaching "Quiet Students" (Nonparticipants)

Faculty Developmental Needs as Perceived by MCCC's Senior Administration

Results From President's Cabinet. In a focus-group session with the President's Cabinet, members discussed how to improve the quality of teaching and learning at MCCC through developing the full-time faculty. Most of the criticisms about the faculty's performance appeared to center on an insensitivity of full-time faculty to the learning needs of the

students. This insensitivity was judged to be, in large part, a result of the inability on the part of the faculty to match teaching techniques to student needs.

The Cabinet members reached consensus on three issues. First, the full-time faculty could benefit from a human resources development (HRD) program which focused on the improvement of teaching techniques based on an understanding of student needs.

Second, such an HRD program should be independent of the regular, managerial operations of the college. Development should not be labelled as an administrative, add-on requirement. Faculty members should consider such a program as a natural part of their ongoing responsibilities.

Third, the OIR had sufficient resources and leadership to develop and implement a faculty HRD program and should be empowered to do so by the President of the College. To accomplish this end, the Cabinet recommended that the President consider adjusting the title of OIR and its position within the MCCC's organizational structure.

Results From Academic Council. In the focus-group session held with the Academic Council, the chair-persons of the academic divisions expressed agreement that the faculty needed continuing development to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning at the college would remain high. They expressed three, specific concerns, however, about the OIR becoming an HRD utility for faculty.

First, the Academic Division of the college was providing faculty with teaching improvement workshops under the Instructional Theory into Practice (ITIP) program. These workshops together with regular graduate study and attendance at discipline-orientated conferences were considered a sufficient development program given the time which faculty had to devote to development concerns. There was, therefore, consensus that faculty had a limited amount of time to spend on new, development activities.

Second, consensus was reached on the issue of presentation of such a development program to the full-time faculty. Group members believed that the new

program had to focus on direct teaching benefits; i.e., being closely related and immediately applicable to teaching responsibilities.

Third, the Academic Council stressed that, in order to give the new HRD role for OIR the best chance for success, development activities had to be non-threatening and based on individual preferences. The group members recommended that the OIR conduct all developmental activities on a volunteer basis, stressing individual development.

Making MCCC's OIR a HRD Utility for Full-Time Faculty

In consultation with the President of the College and Dean for Academic Affairs, the researcher constructed a workable, faculty-orientated HRD utility-model for the OIR which was brought to the Academic Council for its review, input and commitment. The model consisted of a tailored set of guiding principles from which a three-year development plan and restructuring of certain OIR operations were developed. The the approved, three-year is in the Appendix.

DISCUSSION

Both the literature reviewed for this study and the results of focus-group, interview, and survey research support the notion that faculty members, administrators, and educational researchers are sensitive to the changing needs of new student constituencies and changing societal demands on higher education. There appears to be a strong consensus among faculty, administrators, and educational researchers that the teaching-learning environment and faculty-student interaction within said environment can be improved.

In the planning stage of this study, the idea that an Office of Institutional Research could take on the role of a human resources development (HRD) utility for faculty members was considered new. In actuality, it was found that for some years many of the N.J. county (community) college OIR's have performed and continue to perform aspects of an HRD-utility role in serving

faculty members. It appears, however, that the majority of faculty in these colleges still remains unaware of the valuable services offered by OIR's, as shown by the focus-group data with MCCC faculty and the information on faculty participation given by those OIR's surveyed for the study. As shown in the "Results" section of this report, both faculty members and administrators believe that the resources of the Office of Institutional Research can assist faculty members in accomplishing their responsibilities and improving their performances as managers of the learning experience, thereby increasing student success.

Why has not the HRD-utility role of OIR's become fully realized in the community college? Why have not more faculty members taken advantage of the development potential available through OIR resources? The data show three, interlocking, probable reasons for the underdevelopment of the OIR as an HRD utility.

First, there has been a long standing belief that faculty members are individually responsible for their own development. This belief is probably based on the idea that each professional is responsible to keep up-to-date in his or her discipline.

Second, faculty members tend to be fully occupied with their ongoing responsibilities, e.g., teaching, preparing courses and programs, and evaluating courses and programs. This attitude is supported, also, by administrators. Development is viewed as not directly applicable to a faculty member's ongoing responsibil-responsibilities or directly related to achieving greater success in these endeavors. As a result, faculty members have been left mostly alone to find their own individual ways to professional development and to increased success as teachers.

Third, the Office of Institutional Research continues to be viewed from within the college organization as an administrative operation. Data collected for the study illustrate that administrators, in general, do not share OIR resources with faculty members. Further, faculty members who are exposed to OIR resources, while they value them highly as as pertinent to their development, find reasons of their own for their lack of proactive use of said resources. Among faculty and their immediate

supervisors (chairpersons), there is a protectionist mentality which separates the use of OIR resources and the developmental value of classroom (educational) research from the faculty responsibilities which are considered "important."

CONCLUSIONS

Four, interlocking conclusions flow from the findings of this study. First, the development of faculty and the improvement of teaching-learning are one and the same and should be more actively nurtured as an ongoing, institutional operation. To achieve this end, development opportunities for faculty must be aligned more closely with their immediate responsibilities and shown to be directly related (applicable) to positive growth in the faculty members' ability to fulfill these responsibilities in a changing society and with differing student constituencies.

Second, the findings of this study support the notion that the best development programming for faculty members is individually-based or, perhaps, small group-based, educational research whose focus is on local (immediate) teaching-learning concerns. This concept subsumes what has been coined "classroom research" by Cross and Angelo. A better label for this type of development program is "practitioner-based research." After all, faculty members are practitioners, and practitioner-based research focuses on learning to do better what one has chosen to do.

Third, Offices of Institutional Research (OIR's) can take on the role of human resource development (HRD) utility for faculty. This is possible because an OIR is the center of the college's local resource library on its students, service community, and history of successes and failures with respect to course offerings, programs, and services. In addition, the OIR has research personnel who are trained, through service, to perform as guiding experts, collaborators, coordinators, and/or linking agents.

Fourth, for the OIR to be successful in developing a role as an HRD utility for faculty, it must be reconceptualized as an internal service unit of the college's organization. Currently, OIR's are considered as administrative units with no functional

connection to the other units of the college. As such, they are used only by faculty members who have administrative responsibilities (e.g., course coordinators, program coordinators, assistant chairpersons, special committee memberships) or by faculty members who are directed to them because of special needs (e.g., need to access mainframe files or get advice on statistical analyses for a graduate paper or dissertation).

IMPLICATIONS

There are three, important implications which can be drawn from this study. Each will appear radical to traditionally-oriented professionals in higher education.

First, the concept of staff development as an add-on experience is out-of-step in a world which is quickly becoming future orientated. To meet the human resource development (HRD) needs which are evolving at the community college level, a research-based development program is needed. Simply, research on immediate and local problems or issues produces locally-tailored answers which can be immediately implemented, even in mid-semester, thereby increasing student success.

Such a locally-driven, research-based development program is, in fact, an HRD utility because it must be operated continually in order to give individual faculty members the opportunity to explore new alternatives at their own rate and in their own time frames. As a utility, the new form of development program must provide its clients with access to local profile data, trend data, and human assistance in the forms of expert consultation, collaboration, coordination and linkage.

Second, the most cost-effective way to provide faculty with an HRD utility is to develop it as part of the services offered through the college's Office of Institutional Research (OIR). To establish the OIR as an HRD utility for faculty, administrators must learn to share the OIR resources which they currently hold only for themselves. This change of mind-set will not be as easy to do as it sounds, but it is doable, and

the rewards are well worth the effort it will take.

Third, what can be done for full-time faculty can be done, also, for adjunct (part-time) faculty and other college professionals (e.g., student services personnel). The OIR can become an HRD utility for these other employee groups as well as full-time faculty. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that the OIR has a sufficient number of staff members to meet the development demands placed upon it. One possible solution to OIR staffing during the current period of underfunding facing many county colleges is to provide part-time positions in the OIR for faculty members and other professionals who have gained experience and success in using practitioner-based research as a development tool.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The development of the HRD utility role for MCCC's OIR was based on five principles derived from the research. These principles are listed below and can serve as recommendations for other county (community) colleges which may be interested in establishing an OIR based HRD utility:

1. To become a successful HRD utility, an OIR must become a non-threatening, serivice-orientated office to the full-time faculty and other professionals of the college.

2. Faculty members must be considered as individuals with unique concerns, levels of motivation, and professional orientations. An authentic HRD operation, therefore, must promote and support professional development as an individualized enterprise.

3. The development of HRD activities among faculty members is dependent on the guiding leadership of the OIR staff. This leadership should stimulate faculty interest, motivate the articulation of concerns, and exemplify development approaches.

4. The best HRD program for a professional is one which focuses directly on improving his or her daily performance as a professional.

5. An HRD activity is meaningful when it stimulates active learning which is immediately applicable. Learning through doing, reinforced by the direct application of results and communication of findings and accomplishments, is the key to successful HRD. An excellent action model of this principle is practitioner-based research.

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SURVEY OF FACULTY-OIR INTERACTION

As the supervisor of the Office of Institutional Research at Mercer County Community College, I am interested in starting a faculty development program. The purpose of this survey is to gather information about the faculty-OIR interaction at your college. Simply, I would like to know if you already have any "wheels" which Mercer can adopt or adapt instead of going through the inventing process all over again. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Bob Bolge

College _____

Part 1: Services to Faculty

Please indicate in the space provided, whether you offer the following services to faculty members and, if so, the approximate number of faculty members helped during the last twelve months.)

YES	NO	Number	
___	___	_____	1. Test scoring
___	___	_____	2. Test score analysis
___	___	_____	3. Test development
			4. Profile information on students
___	___	_____	a. by specific courses
___	___	_____	b. by specific programs
___	___	_____	c. by entering cohort
___	___	_____	d. by status (part-/full-time)
___	___	_____	e. by total student body on semester basis
___	___	_____	f. by total student body on yearly basis

YES	NO	Number	
___	___	_____	5. Graduate follow up
___	___	_____	6. Assistance with graduate research projects
___	___	_____	7. Needs assessment for program development
			8. Evaluation of
___	___	_____	a. Student learning
___	___	_____	b. Courses
___	___	_____	c. Programs

Part 2: Staff Development Activities

Please indicate in the space provided, whether you have conducted or are considering conducting workshops/ seminars for faculty members on the following topics.

Have Conducted Workshops/ Seminars		Considering Workshops/ Seminars		
Yes	No	Yes	No	
___	__	___	__	1. Analyzing test results
___	__	___	__	2. Constructing tests
___	__	___	__	3. Identifying student learning styles
___	__	___	__	4. Assessing student learning outcomes
___	__	___	__	5. conducting research projects
___	__	___	__	6. Designing/conducting student evaluations

Have Conducted Workshops/ Seminars		Considering Workshops/ Seminars		
Yes	No	Yes	No	
___	__	___	__	7. Designing/conducting course evaluations
___	__	___	__	8. Designing/conducting program evaluations
___	__	___	__	9. Designing/conducting experiments
___	__	___	__	10. Designing data collection instruments
___	__	___	__	11. Utilizing current research on teaching and learning
___	__	___	__	12. Statistical methods of analysis
___	__	___	__	13. Using computer statistical packages (software)

When would be the best time during the week that I could phone you for more information?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ASSISTANCE.

POSSIBLE SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR FULL-TIME FACULTY

MCCC OIR INTERVIEW DATA SHEET

Interview Procedure

1. Check the services/staff development activities which the respondent believes would be good to offer faculty members.

2. Have the respondent identify the two top services/ staff development activities in his/her opinion.

3. Be sure to note additional services/staff development activities suggested by the respondent under "other."

Services to Faculty

_____ 1. Test score analysis

_____ 2. Test development

3. Profile information on students

_____ a. By specific courses

_____ b. By specific programs

_____ 4. Assistance with graduate research projects

_____ 5. Needs assessment for program development

6. Evaluation of

_____ a. Student learning

_____ b. Courses

_____ c. Programs

_____ 7. Other _____

_____ 8. Other _____

Staff Development Activities

_____ 1. Constructing tests

_____ 2. Analyzing test results

_____ 3. Identifying student learning styles

_____ 4. Assessing student learning outcomes

_____ 5. Conducting research projects

_____ 6. Student evaluations (designing and conducting)

_____ 7. Course evaluations (designing and conducting)

_____ 8. Program evaluations (designing and conducting)

_____10. Designing data collection instruments

_____11. Utilizing current research on teaching and learning

_____12. Learning statistical methods of analysis

_____13. Using computer statistical packages (software)

_____14. Other _____

_____15. Other _____

_____16. Other _____

_____17. Other _____

ESTABLISHING A PRACTITIONER-BASED, EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH OPERATION AT MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A THREE-YEAR PLAN

Rationale

In its first twenty-five years of operation, Mercer has successfully met the challenges of providing postsecondary opportunities to community members who would not be served by traditional higher education institutions. In its next twenty-five years, Mercer must address the newly emerging issues of (1) a larger nontraditional student body which is becoming more fragmented with respect to educational preparation and learning needs and (2) an evolving economy which requires special training, life-long learning, and a diversity-orientated liberal arts education.

To meet these new challenges, Mercer should begin to focus on the teaching-learning techniques, delivery systems, and the behavioral objective system which it uses to serve its students. Which techniques and systems are best for whom? Are there inexpensive techniques and systems which work as well as or better than more expensive techniques and systems? How can student learning styles be used to improve learning?

These questions and others can be addressed through small-scale, local research studies. The Office of Institutional and Educational Research can assist individual faculty members who are interested in conducting important and immediately usable research. Also, such research studies can help other faculty members assess their efforts.

Simply, research has become easier to do and more needed within the educational enterprise. New, more sensitive forms of analyses are now available. Further, grass-roots research is needed to increase student success and to give faculty members a fruitful channel for professional development and a sense of accomplishment and professional self-worth.

Phase I: Introduction of practitioner-based, educational research as a viable option for full-time faculty members.

A. Time line: Academic Year 1993-1994

B. Objectives:

1. To introduce the concept of educational research to the faculty through visits to academic divisions and presentations at divisional meetings.

2. To promote thinking on teaching-learning topics for research among interested faculty members.

3. To enlist volunteers for a student-learning styles project.

4. To begin disseminating information pieces on current teaching-learning research activities and findings to the full-time faculty.

Phase II: Execution of a student-learning styles project.

A. Time line: 1994 Spring Semester

B. Objectives:

1. To select an appropriate instrument.

2. To have faculty volunteers administer the instrument to their course sections.

3. To share results with participating faculty members.

4. To follow up the usefulness of results among participating faculty members.

Phase III: Reinforcement of practitioner-based, educational research opportunities among full-time faculty members.

A. Time line: Academic Year 1994-1995

B. Objectives:

1. To continue to promote thinking on teaching-learning topics for research among interested faculty members.

2. To expand the student-learning styles project, if appropriate.

3. To assist faculty members in conducting teaching-learning research projects (minimum desired outcome: five projects).

4. To continue to disseminate information pieces on current teaching-learning research activities and findings to full-time faculty.

5. To prepare and distribute an OIR Research Guide on (a) available educational research resources, (b) types of possible research projects, and (c) a "how to do" step-by-step section.

Phase IV: Institutionalization of practitioner-based, educational research as a standard operation of and professional growth opportunity at the college.

A. Time line: Academic Year 1995-1996

B. Objectives:

1. To promote practitioner-based, educational research among permanent, part-time faculty members, appropriate student service personnel, and academic support personnel.

2. To assist faculty members and selected others in conducting educational research projects (minimum desired outcome: ten projects).

3. To publish and distribute an internal research journal.

4. To distribute a newsletter to faculty and staff focusing on current research findings and topics which could be applicable to Mercer.